536 the folk plays may easily incorporate new elements. This fact accounts for the Communists' effort to revamp the folk plays and to bring them up to the same level of popular and artistic recognition as the ching-hsi. However, in the Communists' effort to reinterpret history, the ching-hsi is now rendering unique service. The Communists have not only revised many of the old scripts to conform to their ideology, but have also encouraged the writing of new scripts. In this attempt, well-known actors like Mei Lan-fang and Ch'eng Yen-ch'iu are asked to lend a helping hand.

Playwrights in Communist China are now told to study ching-hsi, because this form can be used to dramatize personalities. In the Communists' efforts to glorify the image of the "new heroes," this art is considered extremely important.

545 3. The new opera. The new opera in China is modeled after the operatic forms of the West but the content conveys revolutionary themes. The first experiment in this form was The White-Haired Girl (1944), a collective creation of the writers and artists of the Lu Hsün Institute of Literature and Art. In the arias sung by the heroine, the musical pattern of the Hopei pang-tzu is borrowed to convey her changing moods. This is considered a very successful adaptation by the Communists. But the melodies of the other sung parts, which appear to be of yang-ko origin, are close to folk songs and lack dramatic effect. The White-haired Girl has been characterized as "drama-plus-songs," a term which indicates that the operatic form is not well enough developed to enable the music to carry the theme.

345 This inadequacy was remedied in the second major opera commissioned by the Communists. The opera Liu Hu-lan gives the heroine Liu Hu-lan opportunities "to delineate her heroic personality" in longer and more frequent arias. The musical pattern of the Shansi pang-tzu is used in the areas, and the whole opera has a Shansi color.

The composers were alarmed when they discovered that the melodies which describe the corrupt life of the landlord in the opera The White-haired Girl were hummed by the audience rather than the arias of the heroine and the chorus of the 8th Route Army. They resolved not to give the "negative" personality strong musical treatment. As a result, the opera Liu Han-lan incorporates disjointed melodies for the villainous roles. The villains are shallowly caricatured. Thus, for ideological reasons, the Communists now limit "true music" to the expression of "lofty passions" for the "right cause."

The new operas are intended for national consumption irrespective of regional differences, although local airs are incorporated into the scores according to the locality of the stories. Both The White-haired Girl and Liu Hu-lan are based on incidents which occurred in North China, although they have been transformed by grossly "dramatic exaggeration. They are performed by opera troupes all over China, and their influence is therefore national. Other well-known operas include the Long March, in which for the first time Mao Tse-tung is impersonated.

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BOOK II—SOCIAL

CHAPTER I.

THEATRICALS, ETC., 演戲

THE puppet shows or Punch and Judy shows are called *chou chou tzŭ* 肘肘子 because the puppets are held up in a man's arms (*chou*, arms). An ancient name for puppets was *k'uei lei* 傀儡. Another name is *pang* 棒. This kind of play is said to have been originated by T'ang Ming Huang (唐明皇) now deified as god of the theatre under the title T'ai tzŭ 太子 p'u sa. His image is worshipped in the *lao lang* temple 老郎廟 which is the temple of actors. In this temple and guildhall aged and infirm actors are housed and fed, and are buried at guild expense.

The puppets are made from the heads of coffins 頭顱 of newly beheaded or murdered persons. Such wood is believed to be very responsive 靈 *ling*. The spirit of the dead person is worshipped and called for daily, and after a time is supposed to enter the puppet and speak from the stage.

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545 In shadow plays, *têng ying hsi* 燈影戲, the figures are made of leather and the performance is generally held at night. The court-yard of a house is curtained round with white calico; within there is light, without it is dark, and the figures are manipulated so that the shadows fall on the screen for the spectators outside to view.

In the *pei tan* 被單 *hsi* or sheet play the actors screen off a small enclosure with black calico and display a small wooden puppet over the top of it. The puppets are worked by strings attached to legs, arms, tongues, etc. The showmen are trained ventriloquists, and make their puppets dance and kick about in most amusing fashion; the figures are called *shên t'ung-tzŭ* 神童子, because they are so smart and acrobatic, and they are probably procured in the same way as those of the Punch and Judy shows.

There are amateur theatrical companies composed of local actors or farm labourers with a gift for singing or acting, and called *têng pan-tzŭ* 燈班子. Many join such a troupe to have a gay time of running round the countryside; the rustics call these escapades *sao têng* 騷燈. Such companies only get about 5000 cash for a day's performance.

[533] Street singing is termed *pan têng* 板凳 *hsi* (stool concert), or *wan yu hui* 玩友會 (friendly society), or *wei ku* 圍鼓, (round the drum).

The peepshow, *hsi hu* 西湖 *hsi* (west lake show) is a box with glaring pictures outside, and peepholes through which those who pay may look at the pictures inside, these being brought into view in turn by means of a handle.

Performers go from door to door getting a single cash at each for making a puppet dance up and down by the motion of a fan; *shan tzŭ* 扇子 *hsi*.

545 231 Others go from house to house with a monkey, a dog and a box of paraphernalia. Money for a performance having been paid down the performer directs the monkey which opens the box, dresses itself, and rides the dog or drives it hitched to a miniature plough.

Theatricals are given in each parish in front of the *Yang miao* 秧苗 *t'u ti* or local god of sprouting grain, in order to keep insects away from the growing crops.

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The open stage theatricals *ming t'ai ta pan-tzŭ* 明臺大班子 are almost always given on a stage called *wan nien t'ai* 萬年台 located in temples in front of the chief idol. They are got up for the purpose of pleasing the gods, and the expenses are always paid from temple funds; but the public is allowed to witness performances. The plays are nearly all historical. They belong to three periods: *ch'un ch'iu* 春秋 period plays, of the time of Confucius; *chan kuo* 戰國 *hsi* of the times of Mencius; *san kuo* 三國 *hsi* plays about the time of the Three Kingdoms. These last are called 'pure' plays, *ch'ing* 清 *hsi*, because there are no demons in them. Besides the historical plays there are others of a lower grade, such as the *fei fei tzŭ hsi*; this class is without proper beginning or end to the performances. There are also the lower grade music hall theatricals called *fêng hua hsüeh yüeh* 風花雪月 and *chien yin ku pa* 姦淫估霸. 545 ●

Behind much that is unreal there is often a good deal of historical truth; for example, in the famous play *Mu lien ta hsi* or *Mu lien chiu mu* 目連救母. Mu lien lived near P'eng hsien 彭縣 in Ssŭ-ch'uan. It is said that his family residence is still to be seen. His father, Fu Yüan-wai 傅員外, had a literary degree and every comfort but he long was without a son. The wife was a strict vegetarian, and they both prayed continually for a son, till, when the husband was 60, a son was born, and named Mu-lien. Later, the mother broke her vegetarian vow, became profligate and came to a bad end; but still worse, when passing through the ten regions of purgatory she was struck by a spike and fell into the abyss. Mu-lien, on hearing of this, determined to rescue his mother. To this end he became a Buddhist priest, and by strict asceticism attained incorporation with the Buddha. Still thinking of his mother he made known the burden of his heart to Buddha and was sent by him to save her. He burst the gates of Hades with a *ch'an chang* 禪杖 meditation staff, and bore his mother out of purgatory in triumph, followed by a crowd of demons. The boatmen on the upper Yangtze declare that they are the incarnation of those demons, and the song they sing while rowing is said to sound very like a hungry demon's. They say that if they do not sing this song the boat will not move foward. 545 539

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545 This is a famous play, and when acted in full takes 40 or
539 50 days. All the details are acted, even to the throwing of the dart which struck the woman; and a coffin is always ready to receive the corpse if the throwing should be unskilful and cause death. If the actor survives, the coffin is sold and he receives the money.

It is a common belief that Mu-lien became Ti-tsang wang 地藏王, god of the lower world.

545 The actors in a dramatic company are as follows. *Shêng* 生, who acts the youthful scholars' parts. Lao 老 *shêng* acts the old and bearded scholar, and *hei* 黑 *shêng* the black-bearded scholar. *Wên* and *wu hsiao* 文 and 武小 *shêng* are respectively the civil and military student. *Tsan* 淨 takes the wise man's part.

The term *tan* 旦 is used for these who take women's parts; *lao* 老 *tan*, the old woman; *hsiao* 小 *tan*, the respectable woman; *chêng* 正 *tan*, the unmarried girl; and *hua* 花 *tan* the indecent woman, the singer of lewd songs, etc.

Mu 目 is the clown, also called *ta hua lien* 大花臉 first clown, with the whole face painted, and *êrh* 二 *hua lien* or second clown, with half the face painted. *San* 三 *hua lien* or *ch'ou* 丑 the third clown plays off against the *hua tan*, and has generally only one patch of colour, about the nose.

As to times, the early morning performance is *tsao san chih* 早三折; the chief performance of the day, between ten and two o'clock, is *kêng pên* 耿本 or *chêng mu* 正目; that in the afternoon is *hsia pên* 下本, and an additional evening performance is *hua hei* 花黑, while night theatricals from 7 to 9 o'clock are *yeh hei*.

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and disappointed when told that there was no demand in England for hair dyes of that colour. Perhaps the lapse of time has by now given him his heart's desire.

The San-ta sawbwa was a much younger man, with a decidedly intelligent but rather shifty-looking face, much pitted with small-pox. He was extremely anxious to learn about western inventions, and was greatly struck with our tents and heliographs. He had not a very good reputation among the Shans and was said to have succeeded to the sawbwaship by putting one of his relatives out of the way. An account of his untimely end at the hands of the executioner will be found on a later page[1].

We had no escort of our own except a nominal one of a corporal and four men of the Yorkshire Regiment, whom we took more as a matter of dignity than from any anticipation of danger.

Our second march took us into Möng Mow, the capital of the Chinese Shan State of that name. We were met about a mile from the town by some Chinese troops and by some of the Shan followers of the Möng Na and Möng Mow sawbwas. The Möng Na men looked very well in green sleeveless coats with a black border, and most of them were armed with breech-loaders. The town is built at the foot of the bare range of hills which bounds the Shweli valley on the north, and is surrounded by a brick wall in a very fair state of repair. The place was en fête at the time, as one of the Möng Na sawbwa's four sons was just going to be married to a daughter of the Möng Mow chief.

We halted the next day and went to pay a visit to the sawbwa. His palace was a very small tumble-down building, and the sawbwa himself a little shrivelled-up looking man, extremely nervous in the presence of the Chinese officials, and I believe almost incapable of managing his affairs through over-indulgence in opium[2].

In the evening we went to an amateur theatrical performance, in which most of the parts were taken by members of the two sawbwas' families. The piece was in Shan, but was a translation from the Chinese, and was all sung to the monotonous tune of the Chinese theatre.

[1] See page 189.
[2] He died not long after our visit.

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CHAPTER XIX

YÜN CHOU TO TA-LI FU.

Watts-Jones's line across the Mekong—Theatricals at Mêng-lang—Wild pig and pheasants—The Mekong at Hsi-chang ferry—Narrow paths—Falls of our mules—A Chinaman's pipe—P'u-mans—Exploring a pass—Panthay villages—An Arabic koran—A midnight thief—The Kung-lang valley—Hot springs—Méng-hua T'ing—An anti-foreign town—Iron mine—Ta-li Fu—Mr Amundsen's travels—No news of Ryder or Watts-Jones.

000 At Yün Chou we had found a letter left there by Watts-Jones. He had discovered a practicable way across the Mekong *viâ* Méng-lang and Kung-lang, but there were some passes to the east of the latter place which he had not had time to explore. It was possible that these might prove easier than the line he had found, so we determined to examine them on our way to Ta-li.

•545 After two days' halt at Yün Chou we set out again, and had a fairly easy march to the village of Méng-lang. Here New Year festivities were still going on, and we were invited to a theatrical performance in the village temple. The young men of the village had got themselves up as elephants, lions, stags, storks, and other animals. The disguise was most crude, and the performance consisted of dancing uninteresting dances and turning somersaults very badly. However the villagers were quite pleased, and we expressed our delight and surprise at the histrionic talent of the place and rewarded the performers with some lumps of silver. I should mention that in places where there is no regular theatre, temples are the recognised places for theatrical performances.

000 Leaving this village the next day we passed some [757] sulphur springs with regular covered-in bathing tanks. These hot springs are very common in Yün-nan and are much resorted to by rheumatic people. Quitting the main